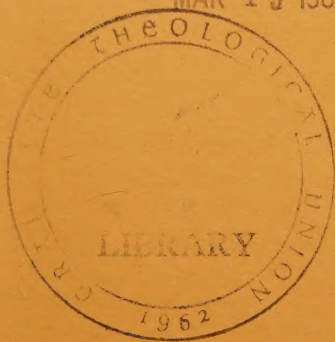


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***THE JOURNAL OF
THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY***

NOVEMBER — DECEMBER, 1979



Throssel Hole Priory is a training monastery, parish church and retreat centre following the Sōtō Zen Buddhist tradition. The Priory is affiliated with Shasta Abbey, whose Spiritual Director is Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess. Shasta Abbey, Headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Sōtō Zen Church, is located in Mt. Shasta, California, U.S.A. The Priors of Throssel Hole Priory are disciples of Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett and follow her teaching.

Throssel Hole Priory and Journal

The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory is published as a service to people who are seriously interested in the practice of Buddhism. Through the Journal the Priory's members and friends share their understanding and meditation experience. We invite our readers to submit material arising from the practice of meditation to be considered for publication. Opinions expressed in each article are those of its author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Priors. The Journal is published bi-monthly (or is less frequently with an equivalent number of pages).

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November- December, 1979
 Vol. VI, Nos. 11,12

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Printed in Great Britain

ONE STEP AT A TIME.

Rev. Rokuzan Kroenke, O.B.C.

I have often suffered from a kind of spiritual impatience. I've had this desire to do it all right now and there was such an overwhelming amount to be done I would eventually just collapse under the weight of it all. The struggle, the impatience, came from doubting that I could do "it", do something about myself, and then, when I get my courage and energy up, trying to do it all at once.

We don't deal with ourselves all at once, in one great energetic push. We got the way we are by doing little things, in little ways over a very long period of time. That is how we have to deal with ourselves - "One step at a time", that is really all there is to it, but what exactly does that mean? Well at first it simply means to set up a daily practice of meditation. It doesn't even have to be a half hour period, just we need to do it daily. Then we need to work on keeping the precepts. When we are truly trying to do these two things if obstacles arise, e.g. doubt about what we are doing or how we are doing it-- it is much easier to deal with because our heart knows that we are at least willing to do something worthwhile. The willingness here is vitally important. It is this to which our heart responds. This willingness is what loosens the bonds of our desire so that we no longer feel the need to hold onto them or push them away. This willingness is vitally important to make spiritual progress; it is a willingness in all things before the Lord; but it is not a passive thing - it is important that it be a willingness with enthusiasm. From a daily practice and from keeping the Precepts our faith grows, doubts begin to subside, and our lives begin to take on a new perspective. All of this from just one step at a time. It may take a long time to begin to see any progress but that's OK. Just know that meditation works and if practiced daily, progress is being made. After all, we have, at least, the rest of our life.

And when we fall on our face, that's fine, no guilt, no self-judgement - just pick ourselves up and keep on trying: 'Going on, going on, always going on, always becoming Buddha'. Falling on our faces is not a problem. Nor are our feelings about ourselves for having fallen. If doubt or anger or despair or anything else arise from our actions we treat them as we do anything else in meditation: We allow them to arise and we allow them to pass. There is no judgement in Buddhism. There are just thoughts like any other thoughts. We simply go on doing what is right in front of us, always doing the very best we can and not worrying about what we are not yet capable of.

It is also unimportant how we feel about training. Some of us may keep expecting to want to train. This is saying in a sense "if I just wanted to do it, it would be easy" and most of us find that it is anything but easy. It really doesn't matter whether we want to do it or not. Training may never be easy, or comfortable, but if we allow ourselves to see, then we know that it is the only thing that we can do, the only thing that needs to be done. We therefore don't sit to attain something as there is nothing in any case that we lack. Sitting for spiritual attainment is storming heaven, it is entering a kind of spiritual rat race and this very desire for spiritual attainment is what prevents it.

And so we are back to simply taking one step at a time. There is nowhere else to go. Allow yourself to look at what is right in front of you. It is not necessary to conquer the mountain today. The mountain is conquered by just putting one foot in front of the other.

In closing I would like to share with you one of my favorite quotations of Dogen Zenji,¹ "The Way to Buddhahood is easy. They who do not perpetrate evil, they who do not try to grasp at life and death but work for the good of all living things with utter compassion. giving respect to those older, and loving understanding to those younger, than themselves, who do not reject, search for, think on or worry about anything have the name Buddha. You must look for nothing more!"

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

During the last several months, we have found that we are unable to meet rising prices with our current level of income so, very reluctantly we have decided that we will have to raise several fees in 1980. Beginning in January, 1980, our weekend retreat fees will now be £14.00. So as not to deter those of you who would like to come to the Priory more often, we will reduce the fee to £12.00 for the second retreat in a year (or a retreat and Sesshin) and to £10.00 per retreat for four retreats in a year. There will continue to be a £2.00 per person discount if a group of three or more apply and attend a retreat together.

The Journal fee will be raised to £4.25 annually beginning with the renewal of the subscription and no longer will there be a special rate for standing orders.

We do not plan to raise any other fees at this time sesshins will continue at their present rates as will resident stays at the Priory other than at retreats.

The happiest solution to our financial problems, of course, would be for more people to attend retreats and sesshins. In this way, people would gain spiritually from the retreat and at the same time, increase the income of the Priory. We believe that the physical conditions at Throssel Hole have improved over the last several years and we, as the current Priors, are committed to making the facilities more attractive, safe and comfortable during our tenure. If you have been reluctant to come to the Priory because of its conditions in the past, we would urge you to give it another try this year.

We would also appreciate your help with putting up posters announcing the programme of the Priory in well travelled locations in your area, such as bookstores, college campuses, whole-food stores. We have found in the United States that many people who were seeking to

learn about Soto Zen training, discovered Shasta Abbey by seeing one of the Abbey's posters. Please let us know if you would help us in this way.

The Cosmic Buddha IS*

Rev. Chūshin Passmore, Priest-Trainee

The most difficult and persistent question I have had to face so far since embarking on Zen training centres on the reality of God's existence.

For many years, Buddhism appealed to me mainly because it promised to satisfy the contemporary search for "the thinking man's religion". Buddhism appeared to be quite rational, there was no God to acknowledge and worship, no dogma based on fear and superstition, individual experience was sacrosanct, and even renowned Western thinkers like Schopenhauer lavished praise on Buddhism as a philosophical system. What one had to do was to look at a wall until something "happened", and all worries ceased. So I eagerly embraced Zen Buddhism as an empirical religion, one that was most suited to my temperament.

Of course, my attitude was woefully intellectual, arrogant and self-centred.

When I started to train in the Dharma I experienced something akin to severe cultural shock when I was told that there was, most definitely, a Cosmic Buddha. This was a catastrophe. I had already dealt with God quite efficiently, thank you. I had given the matter a great deal of study, and finally dismissed Him as an obsolete myth or wish-fulfilment fantasy. Perhaps the Cosmic Buddha was not *really* God, but merely a useful symbol? This soothing thought lasted about a week in face of the teaching I was receiving, and eventually I had to concede that the terms "Cosmic Buddha" and "God" were indubitably synonymous. A catastrophe. My ego recoiled in anger and I felt cheated, particularly by the numerous books on Zen I had read which had carefully steered clear of the subject. Still I

*Reprinted from *The Journal of Shasta Abbey* Sept.-Oct. 1979, by permission.

could not believe in God or the Cosmic Buddha--
although I had never doubted the sincerity and honesty of my Teacher (which confused me even more).

For the last two years, this problem has expressed itself in doubt, despair and at times, cruel cynicism--a slow and quite painful process was under way. I did not *know* God; I could not love God; I *would not* love God--so there. The term was meaningless to me. However much I tried to interpret it, it remained an elusive concept, an idea with no practical value. I realise now that the other difficulties I experience in training, whether anger, jealousy, laziness...all the sad states of mind our humanity is heir to...are all born out of this one basic struggle--the seeming inability, but in fact, *unwillingness* to accept that the Cosmic Buddha IS.

I would never have believed that this was my personal kōan and it still surprises me. After all, my other problems, depression, anxiety, morbid despair, were so much more *interesting*, even contemporary or, better still, existential. (It is significant that we invariably refer to "our" problems as we do "our" possessions.) This kōan has gradually been crystallizing itself beneath the surface of my everyday activities, becoming firm, clear, and inexorable, until a few days ago when at last I chose to confront it. Or rather it confronted me.

For several days, I had been indulging a particularly distasteful attitude, with frustration and bitterness dominating my behaviour. I was totally at a loss. It felt as if the good that was in me had finally wasted away. I was abandoned, an exile without a home. The "evil urge" had triumphed and it was time to give up--again. Having nothing better to do, I went to the Meditation Hall, simply to be on my own. I had no intention of trying to meditate

for had I not proved that I did not know how to meditate, that it was useless? So I sat there, feeling comfortably miserable and completely alone.

After a while I found myself repeating, "How can I love You when I do not KNOW You? How can I KNOW You? It was an urgent cry, arising not only from anger and despair, but also from a deep and tender longing. I had asked this question many times before, but now I was more desperate and an answer meant everything to me.

"HOW CAN I KNOW YOU?"

Very softly and without delay I heard the words--

"LOVE MY CREATURES."

For some reason the phrasing sounded a little awkward to me; but it was clearly repeated and the answer was unmistakable. The enormity of my arrogance then became obvious. I had been demanding *a certain knowledge* of God before giving up anything of my old self, a knowledge which I did not deserve and had not yet earned. It was the pride of Lucifer when he cried out in defiance, "Non Serviam!" I had been unwilling to *serve*, and had forgotten that Compassion precedes wisdom. I had been secretly hoping that God would reveal Himself to me in a mystical and tangible manner, thereby making belief unnecessary. But Faith is not subject to our limited opinions or expectations.

"LOVE MY CREATURES."

The relief I then experienced was profound as a great band of tension snapped somewhere inside me. This simple event, by no means a blinding revelation, was enough to cause a revolution in me. It quietly turned my life around--again.

"Do good for others" is another way of saying "Love my creatures". This is a Precept which demands of us no special knowledge or attainments, and which refuses any hint of compromise. It does not require a dramatic, expansive, or sentimental love, nor a constant effusion of warm feelings--the reality is much less exciting and more arduous. In Rōshi Kennett's Commentary on the Kyojūkaimon the fundamental guidelines for our behaviour are described;

"Do not set up a chain of causation that will cause others to do wrong; do not do that which will cause another to grieve; do not do that which will result in your creating karma for another being; do not accidentally set the wheel of karma in motion."

We can indeed *learn* Compassion, and it takes a lot of right effort and understanding. Specific rules of behaviour are given in the Taitaikōhō, such as the following--

19. When with a senior never give a large yawn. If you must yawn cover your mouth.

20. Never touch your face, head or limbs when with a senior.

21. Do not sigh heavily but behave yourself with respect when with a senior.

By agreeing to follow such rules, apparently so trivial and far removed from deep religious experiences, we begin to build the foundation of True Compassion by clearly and *repeatedly* expressing, in our everyday life, respect and gratitude towards our fellow trainees. If we have an unpleasant habit, say picking one's nose in public, then if we choose to stop it we are acting with compassion. By so doing we love God's creatures in a quiet, undemonstrative manner, we begin to grow in gentleness and expand our awareness of the needs of others. The

Precepts unfold naturally as our habits of thought and action change. Training is not usually immediately rewarding, but once we fully accept and understand the *spirit* of the Taitaikōhō and Chapter 5 of *Zen is Eternal Life*, "The Necessity of Understanding the Heart of Kanzeon", training becomes the only honest and complete way of living. It is the foundation.

"love My Creatures" touches everything around us: animals, plants, the objects we use, food... and we must take great care not to be selective in our gratitude. This point is beautifully expressed in *The Legend of the Baal-Shem* by Martin Buber--

Around each man--enclosed within the wide sphere of his activity--is laid a natural circle of things which, before all, he is called to set free. These are the creatures and objects that are spoken of as the possessions of this individual: his animals and his walls, his garden and his meadow, his tools and his food. In so far as he cultivates and enjoys them in holiness, he frees their souls. 'For this reason a man must always be compassionate toward his tools and all his possessions.' ¹

We have to work with what we have in front of us and not seek special experiences or consolations. When we get up in the morning we should put our bedding away quietly and with care, and when we go to bed at night we must take pains not to disturb others. If we refuse to see the importance of these actions, and hundreds more like them during the day, then we are refusing to open up our hearts to all that surrounds us and should be not at all surprised if our lives seem dead and without joy. Religious experience should not be sought outside of eating

1. From "The Life of the Hasidim" in *The Legend of the Baal-Shem*, Martin Buber, Schocken Books, New York, 1969, p.38.

breakfast or cleaning one's teeth--these are religious acts if the attitude of mind reflects the Precept "Love My Creatures".

I may not have that certain knowledge of the Cosmic Buddha which I once demanded, or perhaps I do, but the Truth is it does not seem so all-important now. I had created this obstacle, this insurmountable kōan, simply to distract myself from training. Where is it now? All obstacles eventually dissolve through the power of Zazen, if we have the courage of perserverance. The Precepts will guide us naturally to the Truth, if we can forget our selfish opinions and cultivate patience.

Where is it now? It was never THERE.

He is a most exquisite Voice, a voice
That all the world encompasses; the
Voice

Of Brahma, Voice of Oceans- One that
all

The voices of the world does much excel,
Because of this our thought must always
dwell

Upon Him. Let us never cherish thoughts
Of doubt about great Kanzeon Who is
All pure and holy and a refuge true,
Protecting in all grief, in trouble,
death,
Disaster.

-- Scripture of Kanzeon Bosatsu
Zen is Eternal Life, p. 274.

REFUGE IN THE SANGHA

Hans van der Marel

"...we take refuge in the Sangha since its members are wise and compassionate." Dogen Zenji.

The most important difference between Zen-training inside or outside a monastery is that inside the monastery there are people all around you who work on themselves and live in that way, and that there is always someone who is more experienced than you are. Living outside the monastery you will have to do it almost without the support of fellow-travellers. But still, to take refuge in your fellow-travellers (the Sangha) is one of the three most fundamental things in Buddhism: Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

He, who enters the way of Buddhism, is searching; that means: he is realising that somewhere in his life something is lacking; there must be something more which is of great importance. i.e. The Buddha

He, who is going to follow the Buddhist Way, takes the Buddha as example and follows his directions. i.e. The Dharma

He, who follows those directions encounters difficulties (things) sooner or later and then needs the support of his fellow trainees. i.e. The Sangha

The importance of the last one is slowly becoming clearer to me, now that I am living in society again after a considerable period at Throssel Hole Priory. If I hadn't been at the monastery; if I hadn't lived among those people who all followed this way - by dogged perseverance - and proved their faith in it by actually doing so, quite soon I would have stopped the whole thing: I never would have built up enough faith in this way, if I had not seen in others with my own eyes, that this was leading to what I was really looking for. Surely, I would have missed the road if there had not been someone who pointed out the right direction to me, over and over again. Heavy loads became bearable by knowing that I was not the only one on this

road; that everyone has a problem (kōan) to solve. It was an incredible support to feel the compassion and sympathy all around me. It was by the presence of the Sangha that I was able to learn a lot; I am grateful for that.

But how is life now, outside the Priory and without fellow trainees? Now I have to do without example, direction pointing, stimulation and sympathy. I have to live and work alone in a world full of distractions and temptations. I have to offer resistance, to face obstacles and to climb out of pitfalls, in which I still* fall over and over again, on my own.

This is a problem (kōan) for all lay-Buddhists living in the world. I think it is helpful to consider this well, because it happens often that non-monks ask. "Is it also possible for ordinary men, or is it only possible for monks to come to enlightenment?" Always, and very emphatically the answer of the Zen teachers has been: "Yes, it is as possible for a layman as it is for a monk. A monk is equally human as a layman is".

I myself have seen and experienced the difference between a monk/monastic life and a lay-Buddhist life, and I can see no difference other than the lack of the (immediate) presence of fellow-trainees. Fortunately a layman's life is not as dramatic as I suggested above, for there are definitely other fellow-trainees, although they are not always living close to me, there is a Sangha for the lay-Buddhist and there are many ways to communicate with them.

For instance through newsletters, like the Journal of Throssel Hole Priory, it is possible to reach and to hear about many others in Britain and even abroad. I myself find it helpful to meet others in my area frequently by meditating together, and in addition going frequently either to the Priory or to one of the Zen weekends in Holland.

One, who is not in such happy circumstances to do at least some of these things, can always write or phone the priests of the Priory. Remember, they are always within reach!

Probably there are more possibilities; let us exchange them (for instance via this Journal). He who wants badly enough, will find a way somewhere.

Sometimes however, it is sufficient to just know that there are fellow-trainees.

homage to the Buddha
homage to the Dharma
homage to the Sangha

In addition to this, I am glad of the possibility now for more experienced meditators to train together. I believe it will be of importance to become better acquainted with fellow-trainees for when meditating together on a more regular basis trainees become more trusting, and it is in a trusting secure environment that it is possible in meditation to open up completely and to come to deep experience.

(Editors Note: Meditation groups are beginning in certain areas of the British Isles and the continent and names and addresses of the co-ordinators are available upon request from Throssel Hole Priory. The priests are always willing to answer questions of a religious nature either by letter or by telephone. If phoning please try to call between the times of 9.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m. unless in an emergency when we are available 24 hours a day.)

1. Shushogi (Zen is Eternal Life) by Roshi Jiyu-Kennett O.B.C., Abbess; Dharma Publishing. 1976, P.157

A TIME TO GIVE

Rev. Teigan Stevens. O.B.C.

In Western countries, it is traditional to celebrate the Christmas season by giving gifts to loved ones and by sending greetings of the Christmas spirit to friends and relatives. For several weeks an atmosphere of openness, fellowship and love seems to permeate the land in contrast to the coldness and competitiveness which seems common during the rest of the year. We, at the Priory, following the tradition of Shasta Abbey, celebrate the birth of our founder, Shakyamuni Buddha, during this season also, finding a similar religious meaning behind it.

When we begin our training we struggle to learn how to meditate and how to persevere in it. We then learn how to apply meditation in other aspects of our life and to begin following the Precepts. At some point the wounds of our suffering begin to heal as we discover through the law of Karma that we have been the cause of re-opening them. As this healing takes place, we are then able to turn the stream of compassion from ourselves to other people. This re-direction of the stream is a natural process. We first "cease from evil",¹ after this "we do only good and do good for others". If we try to reverse these steps, trying to help others before we help ourselves, we find that we are dragged down by our own egos; at best we become ineffective and at worst, hypocritical and self-righteous. However, we do not wait until we entirely cease from evil because that is an impossibility. We begin to "do only good" the moment we seriously undertake to stop creating problems for ourselves and others. We then become worthy to practice compassion. On the other hand, we cannot dam the flow by concentrating only on our own spiritual growth, because the true expression of enlightenment is compassion and love. "When one awakens to true

1. Kyojukaimon. Zen is Eternal Life by Roshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess; Dharma Publishing, 1976, p. 267.

wisdom, it means that one is willing to save all living things before one has actually saved oneself"² St. Francis of Assisi says the same thing in another way. "O Master, make me not so much to be consoled as to console; not so much to be loved as to₃love; not so much to be understood as to understand."³

Helping others does not have to be done with material things. It can be by speaking to another in a gentle manner or by trying to understand fully another's situation; nor does it have to be a grand gesture; the slightest effort, if done wisely and selflessly can be as effective as the most dramatic act. Practicing compassion can even be done without directly trying to relate to another person; by simply doing the best job one can in every activity at home and at work, one is helping others automatically. "It is an act of charity to build a ferry or a bridge and all forms of industry are charity if they benefit others."⁴ It has been said that to act fearlessly is to give others the greatest gift that they can receive. In other words, one is teaching Dharma by showing others how to act from complete faith, how to take refuge in the Buddha; this is a spiritual gift that does not fade with time.

Underlying the effective practice of compassion and love is an attitude of mind that is essential; that of humility. It is the recognition that the recipient and the donor are absolutely equal; in fact, in the deepest sense, the donor is simply a pipeline for the natural flow of love, by making an effort, by being willing. When we are instructed to "not be mean in giving either Dharma or wealth", we are taught that there is nothing to be mean with because all possess the Lord; "there is nothing to be given and nothing to be taken away, and yet all things must be given,⁵ all things offered at all times and in all places".

2. Shushogi, Zen is Eternal Life. P.159

3. Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

4. Shushogi, Zen is Eternal Life. P.160

5. Kyojukaimon & Commentary. P.11

Practising compassion is not a form of martyrdom. It is the actualisation of our training. At a certain point there is no other way to train. A mature oak tree produces acorns, not for the purpose of feeding other living things but because it is its time to give. "For it is in giving that one receives, it is in self-forgetfulness that one finds; it is in pardoning that one is pardoned; it is in dying (to self) that one finds eternal life".⁶

One continues the training, just doing that which has to be done right now, taking the next step, listening to his heart. Sometimes it helps others, sometimes oneself, and sometimes both. There is no difference where one is training for training's sake.

6. Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

PRIORY NEWS

Wedding. On Sunday 3rd Nov. David Hurcombe and Sylvia Smith were married at Throssel Hole Priory with Rev. Teigan Stevens as Celebrant and Rev. Rokuzan Kroenke as Precentor. The wedding party consisted of about 20 friends and family members, several of them coming from as far as London and Ireland. During the ceremony the couple pledge to be "converted deeply to the Three Treasures and make both our bodies and minds pure so that we may make no mistakes in human morals. We are going to help each other and make each of us successful in our own way. We offer the merits of all we do for the welfare of all mankind." Our best wishes to the Hurcombes in the years ahead.

Lectures and Retreats. A weekend inter-religions retreat was conducted at St. Paul's Priory, Quernmore, Nr. Lancaster, by Rev. Rokuzan Kroenke on 16-18 Nov. It was attended by 21 people and Rev. Rokuzan was assisted by Fr. Philip McShane. O.P.

On Nov. 29th Rev. Teigan Stevens spoke to a Buddhist group in Leeds at the Swarthmore Adult Education Centre

Visits. A group of nine students from the comparative religion class at Newcastle 6th Form College visited the Priory on Nov. 16th to see at first hand how a religion that they had been studying was actually practiced in daily life.

On Nov. 27th a priest from Chithurst House, the Venerable Vira Hammo Bhikkhu and several lay people spent an afternoon at the Priory. Chithurst House is a Theravada Buddhist monastery in West Sussex. Gifts were exchanged and we enjoyed an informal discussion which brought out the similarity between Zen and Theravada Practice.

A reporter from the Newcastle Chronicle & Journal wrote an article about the Priory which appeared in the Nov. 23rd issue.

Ceremonies. During the weekend retreat of Oct. 26-28 the ceremonies of Segaki and Segaki Toro were held. The participants offer the merit of their training to those unfortunate beings who have died without having been converted to the Dharma. During the Segaki Toro, a small bonfire is lit and the participants throw scraps of paper and ihais in it, symbolising the burning up of their own and others' Karma. The next day, Nov. 1st. Founders Day was celebrated, expressing our gratitude to Koho Zenji, Rev. Roshi Kennett's teacher, for giving us his teaching.

Gifts. We wish to express our grateful thanks for the following gifts, in addition to money, to the Priory during the last several months: firewood, clothing, sheets and pillowcases, food, a fire extinguisher, pots and pans, a radio, candles, incense, sofa/bed. We also would like to thank everyone from whom the Priory and the Priors received gifts over the Buddha's Birthday holidays.

Work Projects. After one of the November retreats, we returned to the kitchen to find it two inches in water on the floor and the same in the living-room. Apparently, the steady rain, when combined with the gales of wind that suddenly blew up, caused an overflow in our drainage system. After diverting the water which was overflowing the wall outside our kitchen, and cleaning up the floors, pulling up rugs etc. we did a major overhaul on the drainage system. Starting from the upper end of the property, all the drainage pipes were cleaned out and several new ones built. There are still several other drains that need to be dug in order to make the system reasonably safe.

All of the windows and doors in the main house and the dining-room/zendo building have now been weather proofed including the cat door, so that it is easier to keep the rooms warm. With the advice of several heating specialists who have pointed out some ways to keep our furnace going, more efficiently, with no added expense, we are now facing the winter confident of at least a minimum comfort level.

Lay Ordination. On Dec. 25th Norman Trehwitt was given Lay Ordination in a ceremony in which he took the Precepts as the guide for his life. He was given a Wagesa and an ordination certificate. After the Precepts have been taken the Celebrant recites a verse which includes: "The Bodhisattvas, on hearing this explanation, bow towards you saying, "If this is so, you are the same as us. You are believing in and taking the Buddha for your Master and making the Bodhisattvas your friends." After receiving these Precepts you obtain their unbreakable merit; this is the Permanent Precept. I pray that you may always keep it; you must never lose it."

Buddha's Birthday Sesshin. Eight people attended our December sesshin which ended on Sunday 23rd Dec. with the Buddha's birthday celebration and feast. The altar and dining room were beautifully decorated and the ceremony was the culmination of the sesshin. Afterwards the feast was so enjoyed that no one wanted any supper.

Monkey. Our readers might be interested in tuning in BBC2 on Fridays at 6.00 to watch the ancient Chinese Buddhist tale of Monkey. The Shasta Abbey Gift Shop carries Arthur Waley's translation of this story and it's well worth reading.